DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 281 055 CE 047 027

AUTHOR Moorhouse, Catherine
TITLE Helping Adults to Spell.
INSTITUTION Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit, London (England).
REPORT NO ISBN-0-906509-15-7
PUB DATE 77
NOTE 41p.
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Adult Basic Education; *Adult Literacy; Foreign Countries; *Literacy Education; *Spelling; Spelling Instruction; *Teaching Methods; Writing Instruction; *Writing Skills

ABSTRACT

This book presents a range of strategies for adult literacy tutors and offers a wealth of practical advice on teaching spelling within the context of writing. Chapters 1-3 offer basic information on talking with the student about spelling, finding out how the student spells and helping the student to see himself/herself as a "good" speller, and teaching and learning spelling. Chapters 4-7 suggest techniques for teaching spelling. Chapter 4 describes rote writing. Chapter 5 suggests six techniques for emphasizing the visual aspects of spelling. They are "go out and look," flashcards, word jigsaw, picture jigsaw, word completion, and hidden words. Chapter 6 describes three techniques that emphasize the auditory aspects of speaking, in which an understanding of the relationship between sound and symbol provides the student with further strategies for achieving accurate spelling. The techniques are adapted pronunciation, rhymes and jingles, and mnemonics. Chapter 7 covers three logical methods to spelling--discovering syllable patterns, discovering suffix spelling patterns, and discovering "probable" and "possible" spellings. Chapters 8-10 deal with dictionary skills, the role of dictation in learning to spell, and special problems. (YLB)

**********
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
**********

ED281055

# Helping Adults to Spell

Catherine Moorhouse

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

A Wells

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

CE047027

ALBSU
Adult Literacy & Basic Skills Unit

# Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the following for helpful advice, and contributions to the text: Liz Fullwood, David Head, Ros Ivanic, Ruth Lesirge, Charlie Smith, and Hazel Veall. Special thanks to Tony Othen for his encouragement and patience from start to finish.

*Catherine Moorhouse*

**Note on Style**

For the purpose of clarity and simplicity, the pronoun 'he' has been used to refer to students and 'she' to refer to tutors.

*Cartoons are reproduced by permission of PUNCH*

© The Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit
Kingsbourne House,
229/231 High Holborn,
London WC1V 7DA

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be photocopied recorded or otherwise reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

First published in 1977 by the Adult Literacy Resource Agency.

Reprinted in 1982 by the Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit.

2nd Reprint 1985.

3rd Reprint 1986.

ISBN 0 906509 15 7

# Foreword

"Helping Adults to Spell" was first published in June 1977 by the Adult Literacy Resource Agency (ALRA) and since its publication it has become one of the standard books for adult literacy tutors concerned with helping students improve spelling. It is not, however, a book about slavishly teaching spelling, but rather sees spelling as only important in the context of writing.

This book presents a range of strategies for tutors and offers a wealth of practical advice. In essence this edition remains the same as the original, although minor corrections have been incorporated as far as possible into the text.

*Alan Wells, Head of Unit*
*Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit*

# Contents


| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Introduction | 5 |
| 1. | Talking with your student about spelling | 9 |
| 2. | Finding out how your student spells | 11 |
| 3. | Teaching and learning spelling | 15 |
| 4. | Helping your student to spell – Method A, Rote Writing | 16 |
| 5. | Helping your student to spell – Visual Approaches, Methods B – G | 18 |
| 6. | Helping your student to spell – Auditory Approaches, Methods H – J | 22 |
| 7. | Logical approaches to spelling – Methods K – M | 24 |
| 8. | Using and choosing a dictionary | 32 |
| 9. | The role of dictation in learning to spell | 34 |
| 10. | Special problems and ways of overcoming them | 36 |

# Introduction

*Doe you lyke my new phansy in the matere of Spelynge? I have grown wery of Spelynge words allwaies in one waye and now affecte diversite. The chief vertew of my reform is that it makes the spelynge express the moode of the wryter.*

*Frinsns, if yew fealin frenly, ye kin spel frenly-like. Butte if yew wyshe to indicate that thogh nott of hyghe bloode, yew are compleately att one wyth the aristokrasy, you canne double alle youre consonnantts, prolonge mosstte or yourre vowelles, and adde a fynalle "e" whereverre itte iss reququirred.*

*SIR WALTER RALEIGH (1861 – 1922)*
*Letter to Mrs. F. Gotch*

Spelling only matters when you want to *write*. It matters because:

- you want to make sure that what you write is understood by the person who reads it (including yourself);
- you want to be able to write the words which express the meaning you wish to communicate to other people;
- you want to be able to write knowing that people are not going to misjudge your capabilities, and think you are incompetent.

Spelling is not a virtue; it is a convention which has developed over a long period of time. Like all conventions, it has changed, and it is still changing, but much less quickly and noticeably than speech. The meanings, and the pronunciation, of words have changed more than their spellings since the advent of printing, and the time of Dr. Johnson's dictionary. From that time on, spelling mattered. One advantage of spelling conventions is that they enable us to understand the written word regardless of the way the writer speaks. If we all spelled words exactly as we pronounce them, we might find the writing of someone

from a different area of the country difficult to understand, particularly if we are not familiar with the local dialect.

### How do you feel when you meet spelling mistakes?

The trouble with English spelling is that it is more mongrel than pedigree. Words have come from the languages of one invader after another, and often we have not changed them to fit our already existing patterns. In addition, we manage to have an alphabet of only 26 letters, and yet we have at least 45 sounds in our speech to spell, so some letters have to lead a double life. A new alphabet would not really help very much, because of regional differences in our pronunciation, and people who have tried to introduce one to 'reform' English spelling have never succeeded in convincing enough people, so we're stuck with what we've got! In any case, English spelling is much more systematic than many people believe – once you understand the systems in it.

*The aim of this book* is to show those of you who have to work with a student who says he wants to learn to spell, some of the ways in which you can help him to learn to write. You do not need to read the whole of this book in one sitting; use the list of contents at the front to look up the information you want to know. There will be sections suggesting techniques for emphasising the *visual* aspects of spelling; techniques for emphasising the *aural* aspects of spelling; techniques for showing students the *patterns* in the language; a section dealing with the question of teaching spelling 'rules', and a section on special problems. You will not be expected, or advised, to learn a lot of 'rules' yourself. The idea is to show you what you and your student can *do* about the subject of spelling, so that he can write with confidence.

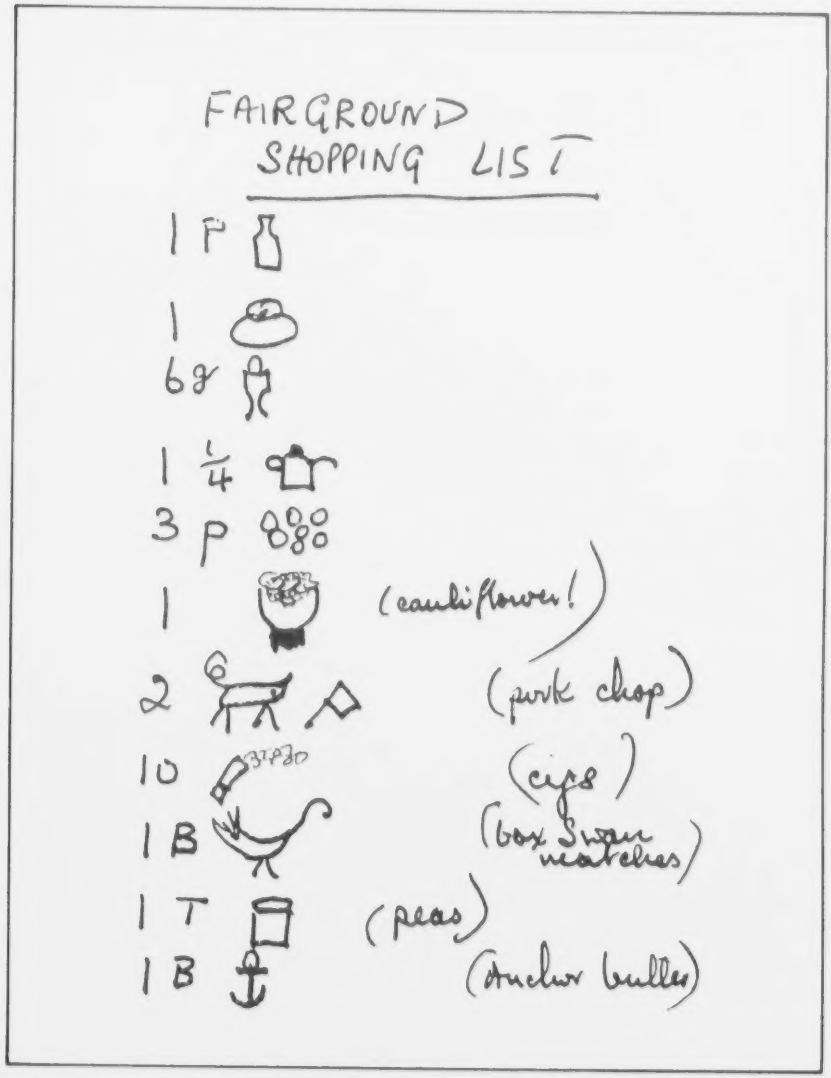
### Spelling only matters when you want to write

Just as Tom MacFarlane in "Teaching Adults To Read" raises the question: "What does your student want to read?", you need to ask your student: What do you want to write? Students often say they want to be able to spell, but do not, until encouraged, give much thought to *what* they want to *write*. Spelling only matters when you want to write – and then it only matters *some* of the time.

If you're writing a shopping list for yourself, spelling doesn't matter as long as *you* know what you mean. But, if your neighbour is doing

your shopping, you might not be too pleased to get 'peas' instead of 'pears'.

Here is an example of a Romany Traveller's shopping list, using a rather unusual writing system:



# Chapter 1
# Talking with your student about spelling

*There was a young man of Dunlaoghaire,*
*Who propounded an interesting theoghaire,*
*That the language of Erse*
*Has a shortage of verse*
*As the spelling makes poets so weoghaire.*

*J.B. Searle*

If your student is a *non-speller*, because he's never learned to write, apart from copying, your first concern is to discuss with him the *kinds* of writing he would like, or needs to learn, to do first, eg. his name and address and birthdate; and then perhaps he needs to do some writing in connexion with his work. You can build up his repertoire of writing activities from these early activities – but make sure that he can *read* the kind of language he wants to write before concentrating on spelling, otherwise he won't be able to tell whether he's said what he meant to say.

If your student is currently a *poor-speller*, but an adequate reader, he may have very mixed feelings about writing: he may feel that he *ought* to write for various purposes, but be frightened of writing incorrectly. You will need to build up his confidence by discussing with him *when* spelling matters to him. You also need to give him a routine for writing which will keep his anxiety to a minimum, and maximise his chances of success, so that he will *know* his writing will stand up to scrutiny by others. The following approach to writing is helpful to the poor speller:

1. Write down your ideas; leave gaps for words you don't know how to spell, or write parts you can spell in pencil.
2. Read what you have written *as an author* – to check the *meaning* of what you have put.

3. Read what you have written as a *proof-reader*; check spelling, and look up in the dictionary, or ask your tutor about any hard words, and write them in.
4. Make a fair copy of your writing.

The value of such a routine is that the student does not have to try to do two things at once, ie. think of and write down ideas, and spell everything correctly. It avoids students having to restrict their writing to words they are sure of, and places spelling in its proper perspective – as an *aid* to communication. It is also a routine which can be applied to writing situations, including form-filling.

For those students whose fear of committing themselves to paper seems to completely block their ideas, it is often helpful to provide them with a *structure* in which to write (or, initially, to dictate), eg.

Today I am _____
Yesterday I was _____
Tomorrow I'll be _____

or

I like it when _____
I hate it when _____

This idea can be extended to short 'story' paragraphs, formal and informal letters, descriptions, instructions, etc. (see Tom MacFarlane's 'Teaching Adults to Read'). The student's writing should then be typed or written out, so that he sees the whole as his 'own' work.

# Chapter 2
# Finding out how your student spells

Comparatively few of us were taught *how* to spell, and if we were, it's difficult to remember the process of learning. If you have not tried to teach spelling before, it is useful to think about how *you* set about spelling an unfamiliar word if you haven't a dictionary – say ipecacuanha (a medicine) or zygapophysis (part of a vertebra).

**Do you**

(i) shut your eyes and try to visualise it?

(ii) repeat it to yourself and consider each sound, or syllable separately?

(iii) write it down in several different ways, and pick the version which 'looks right'?

(iv) think about the *meaning* of the word, and especially of any prefixes and suffixes it contains?

(v) think of other words which have parts sounding similar?

You might use any one or more of these *spelling strategies* – ways of working out how to spell words. The one thing you probably do not think of is spelling 'rules' – though if you get the words more or less right, it means that you have absorbed some 'rules' without realising, and have a good idea of what is both *possible* and *probable* in English spelling (see p. 28).

However poorly a student spells, he too uses one or more strategies, and your first task is to find out what these are, although it may be some time before it becomes clear. Your task will then be to enable him to use these strategies to their best advantage, and teach him new strategies.

You can find out how he tries to spell by (i) asking him, (ii) observing him when writing, (iii) analysing the words, or parts of words, he gets *right*, or right some of the time (see p. 12). You can then use these words, or parts of words, as a starting point for tackling new words, so that you move from the 'known' to the unknown. ALWAYS RELATE NEW LEARNING TO PREVIOUSLY UNDERSTOOD LEARNING MATERIAL.

## Help your student to see himself as a "good" speller

"My spelling is wobbly. It's good spelling but it wobbles, and the letters get in the wrong place." *Winnie the Pooh*

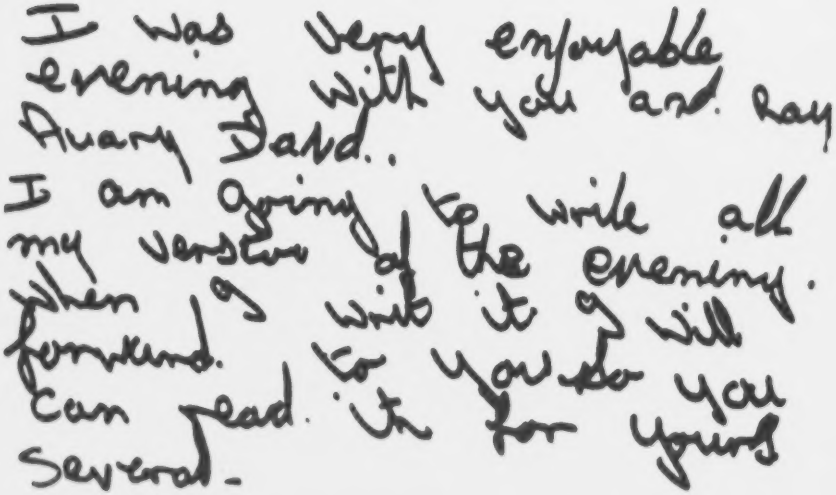
People who have problems with spelling, and especially those who can read easily, tend to see themselves as generally inadequate – which is not a good frame of mind in which to try to learn anything. Being unable to spell accurately does *not* mean a person is not 'normal'. Spelling is not a 'natural' activity; it has to be learned. A person's spelling errors merely tell you that he has not learned. They do not tell you anything about his other competencies.

When discussing his writing with your student, always try to emphasise the positive aspects. This doesn't mean that you have to be patronising or ooze praise; it means that you show him all the things he has achieved, which can prove that he *can* learn to spell. Make a list of his correct spellings, and then a shorter list of two or three which he would like to tackle as a start, pointing out that most of us have problems in spelling some words, giving him an example from your own experience. Opposite is an extract from a letter written by a student ten months after he started to learn to read and write:

There is more right than wrong with this writing. Despite some errors, the student *succeeds in communicating* what he wants to say. He writes in sentences; out of 39 words, he spells 31 correctly; a few words and one part-word are omitted but this does not cause problems to the reader. Of the incorrect words, 'verston' (version) has the first syllable accurately spelled; 'several' (self) is a correct spelling with the wrong meaning. It looks as though this student tries to *visualise* spellings, and his visual memory occasionally recalls an unintended word (see p. 11). 'Wrile' and 'writ' (write) show that the student is in the process of grasping the silent-e pattern, but when he remembers the e, he forgets to cross the t (as if it's too much of a memory load for him to manage yet).

In this student's next lesson, he might look at some words leading on from the word *version*, eg. mansion, pension, etc. demonstrating the pattern of letters of '-sion' (see p. 26). The student might be asked to read his writing, to identify the missing words, to correct 'several' to 'self' himself. He might also be given a revision exercise on the silent-e spelling pattern (see p. 25).

*Always use your student's own writing* as a starting point for work on spelling, because this shows the words within his vocabulary which he is likely to want to be able to write on other occasions.


I was very enjoyable
evening with you and Ray
Avery Dand..
I am going to write all
my version of the evening.
When I will it I will
forward. to you so you
can read. it for yours
Several.

*Be selective* in the errors you choose to work with. Rather than picking to pieces a whole page of writing, choose a few lines containing errors which you feel particularly need immediate attention, and first give your student the opportunity to make some corrections himself before you do. When he next writes a piece, repeat the process, and you will find that you are gradually working through all the most frequent and important words and spelling patterns. You can use a check-list, such as Gill Cotterill's "Checklist of Basic Sounds" (published by LDA, Park Works, Norwich Road, Wisbech, Cambs. PE13 2AX, price £1.15) to record each aspect of spelling you cover. It might also be useful to keep a checklist of words, and spelling patterns, which you need to revise at intervals.

**Systematic revision (a technique for your student to use)**

1. Divide a *wide* sheet of paper into four columns each side. Head the columns:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| side one... | Date and Check; | 1st Try; | 2nd Try; | 10 mins later; |
| side two... | 6 hours later; | 1 day | 2 days | next week; |

2. Write the date in column 1, and under it copy the word to be learned from a dictionary, or from your tutor.
3. Study it until you are sure you know it (see techniques below).
4. Draw an arrow to the next column to show which line to use.

5. Cover it and then write it under "1st Try".
   Don't look at the "check" until you are sure you have done your best.
6. Check it and tick if it is right. If not, correct it and tick it.
7. Repeat 3, 4, 5, 6, for "2nd Try". Even if you got it right the first time this repeat is important to impress it on your memory.
8. Repeat the same process in the other columns at the intervals stated. You will have to do the ones on the back of the page in your own time.
9. Try to use the word frequently in your writing from now on, to practise the correct spelling.
10. Each week, before adding a new word to the list, remind yourself of all your previous words, using a rough piece of paper to try them on.

---



14

# Chapter 3
# Teaching and learning spelling

It is doubtful whether you can *teach* someone to spell; but certain that you can show someone *how to learn* to spell. There is no one system which can guarantee to improve a person's spelling, simply because each of us has a unique set of learning styles, and we tend to use different spelling strategies depending upon the word in question. The next section of this book will describe and illustrate a variety of techniques you can try with your student, and he can try for himself. Some of them he may not like, or you may not like, in which case ignore them. It doesn't really matter *how* he learns to spell as long as he is eventually able to *recognise* (the sounds), *recall* (the letters), and *reproduce in writing* the words he wants to use. If he becomes a really 'good' speller, he will eventually do this automatically. The most important rule about 'teaching' spelling is: DON'T ASK A STUDENT TO LEARN A WORD WITHOUT SHOWING HIM A WAY OF DOING SO.

You will also need to teach your student *some* of the language of spelling – words like vowel, consonant, verb, endings (suffixes), syllable, etc. This will give you both a language for talking about spelling, so that you can explain, for example, –ed at the end of a past tense verb, where its sound can vary, as in camped, sailed, landed.

**CAUTION:** the 'language' of spelling cannot be taught in one session. If you try to teach the terms without relating them to the particular aspects of spelling which you and your student are studying, you will forfeit your student's enthusiasm, and possibly his attendance!

# Chapter 4
# Helping your student to spell -

## Method A Rote Writing
(derived from the Fernald Method)

This method is very thorough, and a valuable technique for students who seem to have severe difficulties in learning new words. It is important that your student should understand *why* you are suggesting the following routine. The reason is that spelling involves several senses: *sight* (when looking at, recalling and writing a word); *hearing* (the voice if the word is pronounced, and associating the *sound* of the word with the relevant symbols); *feeling* (the movement of the writing hand). It is therefore important to involve each of these senses in the process of learning to spell a word.

1. Read the word and say it;


   (student *sees* word, *says* word and *hears* word).

2. Copy the word in large letters;


   (student *sees* word, tells his hand what to *write*, and *sees* his copy).

3. Look at the word, and put a line under the hard bit;


   (student *sees* whole word, and identifies the area of difficulty).

4. Trace over your copy of the word three times, either with your pen, or your finger, saying each part as you trace it;

   (student *sees* each part of word, *feels* the shape of each part of word, and *says* each part of word).

5. Each time you have traced the whole word, say it.

6. Write the word without looking at the copy; (student has to *visualise* the word, and instruct his writing *hand*).

7. Check if you have written the word correctly by comparing it with the copy; (student *reinforces* his visual image of the word).

8. Record the word in your personal dictionary; (this provides a *reminder* to the student, and *revision* material for future lessons).

If your student sees that such a routine brings together all the senses involved in learning spelling – eyes, ears, writing hand – it is likely to be acceptable to him, and once he has learned the procedure, it will not seem so laborious.

The methods in the following section are particularly suited to a student needing to learn what in reading would be called 'sight' words, which are not spelled as they are pronounced, or words which appear difficult at his present stage of learning. They are also methods which the student can learn to use for himself independently of you for say, two words a day. In other words, you can supply him with some more *strategies* for learning words. Words learned in these ways should be ones that the student chooses, and should be revised frequently – at first weekly, then fortnightly, and then periodically. Remember, the more often he writes a word correctly, the more likely he is to write it correctly on subsequent occasions.



17

# Chapter 5
# Helping your student to spell -
## Visual approaches Methods B-G

Spelling is primarily a visual activity; as soon as we have written a word, we can see it. This reinforces our visual memory of the word, and enables us to recall the spelling of the word on the next occasion we need to write it. Most students with spelling problems have a poorly developed visual memory for letters and words, if not other things, so any approach which assists visual memory to develop and improve is worthwhile. Remember that for spelling you need to be able to recall not only the letters which compose a word, but also the *sequence* in which they occur and how to write them in that sequence. "Good" spellers remember all these aspects unconsciously, but the poor speller needs to be aware of each of them. SPELLING LESSONS ARE NOT LIKE MEDICINE – TO BE TAKEN AND FORGOTTEN AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE! ALWAYS INVOLVE YOUR STUDENT'S ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN HIS OWN LEARNING; HE MUST HAVE THE *INTENTION* TO REMEMBER IF HE IS TO BE SUCCESSFUL.

The following methods are particularly useful for helping your student to learn difficult words like, eg. *said, Wednesday, because,* or forenames and surnames, eg. *Michael, Grey.*

### Method B – Go out and look

1. Encourage your student to arrive at each lesson with a word which he has collected en route – a street name, name of a shop, etc. He may have written it down; alternatively he might write it down upon arrival, having tried to remember it during his journey.
2. If he makes an error in spelling a social sight word (ie. a word we often see when we go out), suggest that he finds out and records the correct spelling for himself by looking for it when out in the street.
3. You might give him a common street word which he needs to learn for writing, and ask him to count the number of times he sees it in different places before his next lesson. He will then be looking at it carefully, to check it is the word you mentioned – and he may remember its spelling by visualising it in a context.

ALL WORDS LEARNED THIS WAY SHOULD BE RECORDED IN HIS PERSONAL DICTIONARY, WHICH SHOULD HAVE PAGES MARKED IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER OF LETTERS AND SOUNDS, eg. c, ch, cl, cr.

### Method C – Flashcards

1. Write words your student wants to learn in large letters on a piece of card, eg. Wednesday.
2. Tell your student you are going to hold up each card for 5 seconds, and ask him to look at it and try to 'photograph' it with his eyes; you will then ask him to write down as much of each word as he can remember.
3. Hold the cards up again, one by one, for him to check his writing.
4. Ask him to record the word in his personal dictionary.
5. Check that he remembers the word by giving him opportunities to learn it in subsequent lessons.

Some students may develop different responses to this technique; they will perhaps pronounce the word in syllables, or recite the sequence of letter names to themselves. This gives you information about *how* your student likes to learn, which will be useful in your subsequent planning of lessons. THERE IS NEVER A GUARANTEE THAT THE METHOD YOU USE TO 'TEACH' WILL BE THE METHOD BY WHICH YOUR STUDENT LEARNS. AS LONG AS HE LEARNS, AND AS LONG AS HE FINDS THE ACTIVITIES YOU DO WITH HIM USEFUL, IT DOESN'T MATTER.

### Method D – Word Jigsaw

This is a particularly useful method for students with sequencing problems.

1. Write the word your student has chosen in large letters on a piece of card or paper, eg. Elizabeth.
2. Cut it up into its component syllables, eg. Eliz abeth.

(More difficult words eg. *because*, might be cut up into their component *sounds*).

3. Ask your student to match the syllable cards to a copy of the whole word, pronouncing each part as he does so.
4. Ask him to sequence the cards without looking at the copy, and then to check that he is right. Then suggest he copies the word.
5. Ask him to try to write the word without a copy. He may choose to pronounce each syllable, or name each letter, as he writes it. This is fine, as it means that he is integrating the use of his eyes, brain and hand in writing, almost 'telling his hand what to write'.
6. He should finally record the word in his personal dictionary.
7. Keep the 'jigsaw' for later revision activities, or for reference if he forgets how to spell the word.

---

**CAUTION:** Do not expect your student to learn more than two or three words by this method during a session. You might care to rewrite these instructions, in a simpler form, to give to your student as a reminder that this is a method he can use on his own, or, your student might like to dictate them in his own words for you to write down for him.

---

### A note on copying

Teach your student a procedure for copying. Left to his own devices, he may tend to copy a letter at a time, constantly lifting his eyes from his own writing to the copy. This habit increases the likelihood of miscopying, and it does not aid the development of his visual memory. Therefore, encourage him to look at, and hold in his mind, several letters at a time, or even the whole word if it is short.

### Method E – Picture-jigsaws

This is the same as Method D, except that on the reverse side of the 'jigsaw' a picture illustrating the word is shown. The student can then check the correctness of his spelling of the word by turning the cards over to see if the picture is complete. Nouns are best suited to this approach.

---

**CAUTION:** Some students dislike methods using pictures, as they consider pictures to be a childish aid.

---

The jigsaw method is a useful preliminary to exercises involving anagrams (unjumbling letters to make a word) which many students enjoy, particularly as they are a common feature of crosswords.

### Method F – Word Completion

This involves the student completing partly-spelled words, until he is eventually able to write each word as a whole without a copy,

eg.

| |
|---|
| March |
| arch |
| M rch |
| Ma ch |
| Mar h |
| Marc |
| _____ |

### Method G – Hidden Words

This is to encourage your student to look closely at words, and at the sequencing of letters from left to right.

Ask, eg. (i) what hidden words can you find in *afraid*
answer: *raid*, *aid*;

or (ii) in the word underlined, find the word to complete the sentence: I was <u>frightened</u> when I saw my answer was not_____ (right).

# Chapter 6
# Helping your student to spell-

## Auditory approaches Methods H-J

The next section of this book describes techniques which emphasise the *auditory* aspects of spelling, (methods H, I, J), in which an understanding of the relationship between *sound* and *symbol* provides a student with further strategies for achieving accurate spelling. Not all the words in our language lend themselves to this approach, (many of our most commonly written words do not), but about 85% fall into a *pattern* of some kind. Therefore, if you can encourage your student to see these patterns for himself, you are paving the way for him to be able to spell all the words which fall into those patterns, even those he does not need to use very often.

### Method H – Adapted Pronunciation

This is useful for words with silent letters, eg. knit, thumb, debt, right, diaphragm, etc. Silent letters have been called "the ghosts of departed sounds", and you might explain to your student that many of the now silent letters *used* to be pronounced, and that one way of remembering how to spell some of them is to adopt a special "spelling" pronunciation, mentally or quietly sounding the missing letters.

Some words are mis-spelled because their pronunciation is condensed in comparison with their written form, eg. government = (guv.er.ment) in conversation, and the 'poor' speller tends to omit from his writing syllables he does not hear himself say. Again, encourage him to develop a "spelling" pronunciation for such words.

### Method I – Rhymes and jingles

These can be useful – to those who can remember them. Here is one from a Texas tutor which some students find useful for remembering a few words in the *ei* pattern:

The wicked bandit
Practised dece*i*t
Gazed at the ce*i*ling
And se*i*zed the rece*i*pt.

**Method J – Mnemonics** – trick ways of remembering, eg.

(i) you h*ear* with your *ears*;

(ii) here
there
where
are all to do with places;

(iii) *their* is connected with an *heir* who becomes the owner of property;

(iv) *of* – belonging to, or about, eg. A Tale *of* Two Cities;

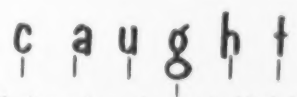
(v) stationery includes *E*nvelopes;

(vi) humo*ur*, behavio*ur* are British spellings. The British flag is the *U*nion Jack, so we put a u in these words;

(vii) *b*lack thum*b*.

You will be able to think of, and find others – but the best thing to do, having illustrated the idea to your student, is to ask him to think up some of his own. It doesn't matter how complicated or ridiculous they are *if they help him*.

Here is an example of a student's mnemonic for *caught*.




Chris and uncle get half tight

You might choose a mnemonic for a particular part of a word pattern, eg. *ough* = *o*pen *u*mbrellas *g*uard *h*air.

There is not much point in asking your student to make up mnemonics for words which he could learn to remember just as easily some other way. But it is a useful device for difficult words like *caught* and *cough*.

Another way is to ask your student to make up a sentence containing a group of words he finds particularly difficult, eg. Father *caught* his *daughter* in *August* and *taught* her not to be so *naughty*.

# Chapter 7
# Logical approaches to spelling -
## Methods K-M

The following methods (K, L, M) which might help your student to spell, emphasise the 'logical' aspects of wordbuilding.

### Method K — Discovering syllable patterns

There are 7 common types of syllable in the language and if your student learns to recognise each of these, his spelling repertoire will be vastly increased.

1. As you read through his writing, pick out those words with which he appears to be having difficulty which fall into one of the following patterns.
   - (i) *short vowel* hat, yet, bit, got, shut, con-tact, fran-tic
   - (ii) *long vowel* be, me, my, by, I, why, ba-con, tu-tor
   - (iii) *silent-e* late, fine, hope, tune, com-plete
   - (iv) *vowel-r* art, term, dirt, port, furs, im-por-tant
   - (v) *digraphs* nail, meat, been, coat, foot, pies, com-plaint
   - (vi) *diphthongs* boil, boy, out, how, noisy, annoy, shouting
   - (vii) *consonant-le syllables* bubble, simple, puzzle, tackle, angle, etc. (short vowels); bible, table, idle, (long vowels).
2. Choose with your student one syllable pattern which he needs to study. Starting with the word he has used in his own writing, together build up a list of similar sounding words,

eg.

| |
|---|
| hope |
| rope |
| cope |
| dope |
| grope etc. |



24

3. Ask your student to read the list of words and discuss the pattern, eg. the o in each of the words says its name – but what happens if we take away the e from **hope**?

4. Demonstrate the silent-e pattern by showing your student other words, eg.

| | |
|---|---|
| hop | hope |
| cap | cape |
| not | note |
| pan | pane |

and encouraging him to explain how the spelling affects the pronunciation.

5. Follow this up with a 'pick the right word' reading exercise.

eg. I $\begin{matrix}\text{hop}\\\text{hope}\end{matrix}$ you will come to tea.

eg. 1. I do not ____ beer.
2. I left the milkman a ____. note like

6. Suggest to your student that he checks this kind of word each time he has written something, ie. begin to make him responsible for correcting his own errors (see p. 9).

Some tutors give their students 'proof-reading' exercises, asking them to correct 'deliberate' errors as a way of practising the use of spelling patterns. Only do this if you are *sure* that your student can cope successfully – you do not want him to learn a series of 'wrong' spellings, or to add to any confusions he may have.

7. Give your student a routine for learning and recording word patterns, eg.

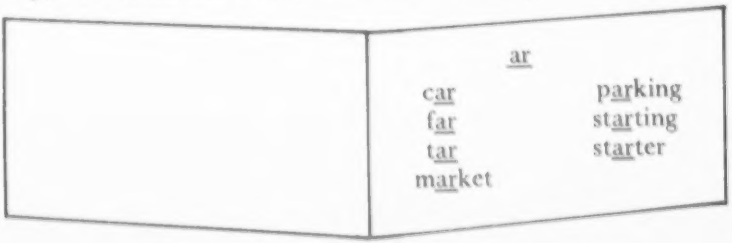
(i) copy the word on to a bit of paper;
(ii) look for other words that have the same pattern (in your own writing, or a newspaper, or books);
(iii) copy these words under your first word;
(iv) look for the part which is the same in each word;
(v) put a line under the part that is the same;
(vi) write the letters that are the same in each word at the top of the paper;



25

(vii) copy the word list into your own dictionary/word book,

eg.




This approach can be used for words with parts that both *look and sound alike*, eg. car, far (emphasising the visual pattern).

It is often a more successful alternative to building up spellings by pronouncing each sound separately. This is because it is very difficult, if not impossible, to pronounce a consonant sound without attaching a vowel sound, so that b-a-t sounded out tends to sound more like 'batter', often leading to an unintended effect on spelling. By emphasising *syllables*, you are encouraging your student to think of whole units of sound, or visual patterns.

In addition, the basic syllables often combine to form longer words, eg. ba-con; ar-tist; Thame-side; free-dom; fan-tas-tic, and you can show your student this by Method D (see p. 19).

### Method L – Discovering suffix spelling patterns

You can illustrate this principle in two ways, depending upon your student's levels of competence and confidence.

1. Introduce each suffix pattern separately, starting off with those which do not alter the spelling of the original word in any way, eg.

   Discuss how the *meaning* of the words is modified by the addition of -ness. Then discuss the fact that the spelling of each word is not changed by the addition of -ness.

| fitness<br>redness | whiteness<br>paleness | oldness<br>hardness |
|---|---|---|
| words ending in one consonant | words ending in silent-e | words ending in 2 consonants |

You can then go on to studying words which DOUBLE their final letter before a vowel suffix,

eg.

| |
|---|
| fit + ing = fitting |
| tap + ed = tapped |
| spin + er = spinner |
| red + est = reddest |

You will be able to assess from your student's reaction how useful it would be for him to verbalise the pattern he sees into a 'rule'. You might write down his version of the 'rule' as he dictates it – several different wordings are possible.

Show your student several examples of each pattern, preferably words taken from his own writing, and help him to *'discover' for himself* how the *spelling* is modified in each case. Then provide him with plenty of opportunities to practise each pattern, in the form of word and sentence completion activities – of course relating these to his own interests and current writing activities.

---

**CAUTION**: You will need a gap of *at least* 3 weeks between the introduction of each pattern.

---

2. For more advanced students, you might choose to demonstrate several suffix spelling patterns by adding them to a particular word, and discussing the *meaning* and *spelling* which can be seen, eg.

*fit* He is *fit* (describing word), Can you *fit* this cupboard? (verb), I nearly had a *fit* when he told me. (noun)

*fits* He *fits* cupboards (verb), He went into *fits* of laughter, (plural noun)

*fitting* He is *fitting* the cupboard now. (present tense verb)

*fitted* He *fitted* the cupboard yesterday. (past tense verb)

*fitment* Those shelves are a *fitment* (noun)

*fitness* His *fitness* for the job was established. (ness = quality of something)

This approach to presenting suffixes emphasises their use *in context.* Ask your student to supply you with sentences using a word with several different suffixes attached, and show him how the pattern builds up.

Suffixes, or 'endings' tend to be complete syllables, eg. -ed, -ing, -ment, -ness which carry a particular meaning. For purposes of spelling, it is best to tell students that the spelling of suffixes never changes, but that they sometimes change the spelling of the word they are attached to.

An understanding of the basic structure of English words can be a useful aid to spelling. For example, if a student can learn to recognise words like musi*cal* as describing something (adjectives) and words like bicy*cle* as being nouns, then the spelling of words like: surgi*cal*, politi*cal*, electri*cal*, cleri*cal*, and obsta*cle*, specta*cle*, cuti*cle*, receptac*le* becomes much easier.

The use of colour to indicate spelling changes which suffixes cause can be a useful prop to students.

### Method M — Discovering 'probable' and 'possible' spellings

If your student's visual memory is still unreliable, then it may be more helpful to him if you find a way of emphasising the visual and aural aspects of words. This raises the horny question of spelling 'rules'. Spelling rules are not useful to the 'good' speller, because he invariably has a good visual memory and therefore does not need to use 'rules'. Many 'poor' spellers do not find 'rules' useful either, because they are too wordy and complicated (especially when there are exceptions to remember) and they cannot remember them. A lot, of course, depends on how the 'rules' are presented; being *told* a 'rule' is not likely to be helpful; *discovering* a pattern, generalisation, 'rule' – whatever you like to call it– for yourself is quite different. You can explain it to yourself in your *own* words; you may not absorb all of the 'rule' at the beginning but gradually come across new parts of it, and eventually all your 'bits' of knowledge will form a complete pattern. You will be able to forget the rule itself after plenty of practice in using it.

The major advantage of this approach to teaching/learning spelling is that it is *economical*; one 'rule' or concept can cover literally hundreds of words and eventually your student will be able to *predict* with reasonable accuracy how a word is likely to be spelled. *But* the approach has no advantages, and may even do damage, if your student does not like it, or succeed with it, and you would do better to encourage him to use some of the other methods described.

As an example of what is *probable* and of what can be *possible* in

English spelling, take the (f) sound. The immediate spelling which springs to mind for the spelling of that sound is f as in fish; but some words, or parts of words, originating from Greek and often connected with light or sound, spell the (f) sound as ph, eg. photograph, telephone. At the end of short words the (f) sound tends to be spelled ff (except for if, clef), eg. staff, stiff, puff; but it is also possible that it might be spelled gh as, fortunately, in only a few words, eg. cough, rough, tough.

If you can help your student to see the most *probable* spelling of sounds, and the *possible* spelling patterns, if he writes a word that does not 'look' right, and he needs to consult a dictionary, then you have given him a valuable strategy, as at least he will know where to start looking.

Let us take an example of some of the 'rules' applying to a particular sound – (j).

At the beginning of words:

jam
just
jury
Jennifer

(j) at the beginning of a word is most often spelled j; this is most *probable*.

gene
ginger

(j) at the beginning of a word is sometimes spelled g; this is *possible*, expecially before i and e.

At the end of words:

rage
huge
George
large
hinge

(j) at the end of words (i) after a long vowel or (ii) after another consonant is spelled ge.

badge
judge
wedge

(j) at the end of words after a short vowel is spelled -dge.

You might help your student to discover this for himself by providing several examples of the patterns, eg.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| rage | large | wedge |
| cage | barge | hedge |
| wage | charge | ledge |
| page | marge | dredge |



29

and asking him to tell you (a) how the (j) sound is spelled, (b) what comes before it. By comparison and contrast of each pattern he can then begin to formulate the 'rule' for himself.

Here is an example of some advice to students who like this approach.

---

You need someone to help you with this method:

1. Discuss with your tutor the word you want to deal with.
2. Ask your tutor to help you to find out the 'pattern' for the spelling of this word, and others like it, eg. use ck for the (k) sound at the end of a short vowel, eg. truck.
3. Write down the 'pattern' you have discovered in your book.
4. Write down some words which fit into the 'pattern' underneath.
5. Collect six more words that fit into the 'pattern' and add them to your list.
6. Teach your tutor, or another student, the 'pattern', and show them how it works with your examples.
7. Continue to look for and collect examples of the 'pattern' to write in your book, eg.

Use ck for (k) at the end of short words after a short vowel:—

| | |
|---|---|
| check | track |
| luck | flick |
| stick | pick |
| cook | knock |

If you want to spell (k) after short a, e, i, o, u use ck

---

The spelling of vowel sounds often causes students particular difficulties.

A table like the following can prove a useful reference tool, where the student chooses a 'key word' to remind himself of the spelling patterns for a sound, and collects other words conforming to each pattern, ending up with a personal reference list.

| BEGINNING | MIDDLE | END |
|---|---|---|
| apron | cake | day |
| acorn | lane | may |
| apex | shake | say |
| able | | |

The major advantage of this approach to teaching/learning spelling is that it is *economical*; one 'pattern' can cover literally hundreds of words.

*"You'll be able to read about bomb outrages, economic crises and mass starvation. Fill in income tax forms and understand No Parking signs. Answer begging letters . . ."*

# Chapter 8
# Using and choosing a dictionary

You may have wondered why there has been so little mention of the ordinary dictionary so far in this book because it *seems* the obvious friend to the poor speller. However, it can prove just the opposite, and many a bleary-eyed student has presented a short piece of writing saying that he's spent three or even more hours doing it. It then emerges that he has tried to look up every word in a dictionary and as he doesn't really know *how* to use a dictionary, or he cannot spell the first few letters of the word, he therefore could not find it.

Your student may not be ready to use a dictionary for some time, but there are plenty of things you can do to prepare him for that time. He needs to learn, if he does not already know:

(i) the alphabet sequence (because that is how a dictionary is arranged);

(ii) sequencing of words beginning with the same letter;

(iii) how to find each section of the dictionary, and the page the word is likely to be on by spelling the first 3 or 4 letters, and looking at the guide words on the dictionary pages.

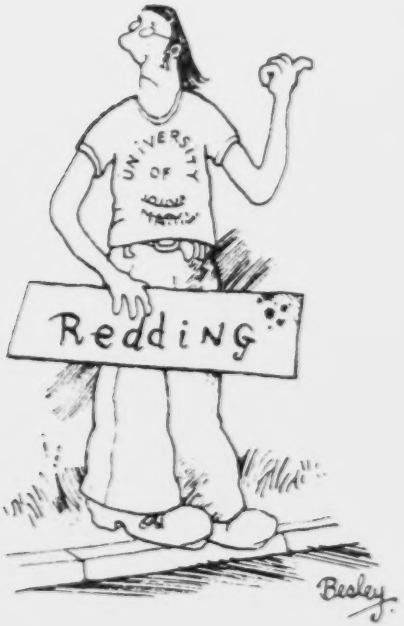
(The ALBSU Adult Literacy Resource Pack gives details of alphabet activities, including dictionary exercises. It is available from your schemes, or from ALBSU).

Eventually your student will want to know much more about how a dictionary works. You can build up this knowledge gradually, taking one aspect at a time, perhaps photocopying one page of a dictionary, and each week discussing and labelling a new aspect.

### Choosing a dictionary

This is a dilemma which many tutors face. Simplified dictionaries have advantages of clear layout and typography, simple definitions, and often the spelling of the word with a variety of suffixes added. On the other hand, all too often they do not contain the range of vocabulary the student wants to use, which is both frustrating and unproductive for him, although he should be keeping his personal dictionary or 'word

bank'. The best thing is to choose a dictionary *with* your student, one which he feels he will like. Students often favour pocket size dictionaries, for obvious reasons, and it may be that you choose to keep one for use in lessons, and that he has his own small dictionary for homework, and independent activities.






33

# Chapter 9
# The role of dictation in learning to spell

This is a question which many people raise, and about which there are conflicting views. Some people consider dictation an 'old-fashioned' technique, and too reminiscent of school classroom experience; others argue vehemently that it is an important aspect of the process of learning to spell. You need to think about *when* you want to use it, *why* you want to use it, and *how* you are going to use it.

Dictation is a useful way of checking your student's progress in learning the words or patterns you think you have been trying to 'teach' him. It can also provide useful practice for students who might need to be able to write down what someone has said, eg. a telephone message; directions of how to get somewhere; a shopping list; an address, etc. Many students are frightened of situations of this kind, either because they are afraid of not being able to record the information accurately, or quickly enough, or because they do not like to write with anyone observing them. Practice in 'taking dictation' can help to build up your student's confidence provided it is related to real-life situations. For example, we very rarely have to write lists of words containing <u>ai</u> in isolation; but most of us do have to write lists of some sort at various times, and writing a shopping or present list is much more real than writing a list dictated from a spelling book. Alternatively, you might use a passage previously dictated to you by your student, and which he has read several times.

Lists and form filling apart, writing often comprises short phrases, eg. '7 pints'; 'back at 5'; 'dinner in oven' – as well as sentences. A word usually appears in context with several other words, and so if you want your student to practise a particular spelling pattern, ensure that you put the words you want him to write into a context that is related to the situations in which he will need to write these words in real life.

*How* you give dictation is important. Here are some guidelines to follow:

1. Make sure your student understands what you want him to do and why, ie. you want him to consider the accuracy of his spelling.
2. Explain the procedure you are going to use, eg. (a) read through the phrase(s), sentence(s) or passage, while he *listens*; (b) ask him if there are any words with which he feels he might have difficulty.

Discuss with him any words about which he seems doubtful, and which belong to a group or pattern you have already studied together. Give him a written copy of any words you wish to use which you cannot reasonably expect him to know.

3. If you have needed to discuss any words, it may be helpful to re-read the material to him.
4. Ask him to prepare to write, and dictate short units of the material. If necessary, repeat each unit. Some students benefit from repeating each part for themselves before they write. Make sure your student has finished writing before dictating the next unit.
5. At the end of the dictation, read through the material slowly enough for your student to be able to check and correct his writing if he wishes to.
6. *Leave the checking of his writing either until the next lesson, or at least until some time has elapsed.* This is because he will find it difficult to see any remaining omissions or mistakes for himself at this point – he has written what he feels is correct. At the next session, or later on, looking at the writing afresh, he is more likely to view it critically. He should have the chance to add any further corrections before you discuss it together.

If you have chosen, or created, dictation material at the right level for him, he should not make many errors. It is obviously important that he should succeed in any writing activity and feel pleasure at his achievement.

### Spelling practice through games and puzzles

There are many word building games on the market which you might use with your student, although you may need to modify the rules to suit his level of spelling ability. Many students also enjoy completing crosswords – you will find good examples in "Write First Time", c/o Barbara Carter, Acacia Road Centre, Acacia Road, Bedford MK42 0HT, "This Month", 10a Old Rectory Gardens, Cheadle, Cheshire, and "Liverpool News", Waterloo Buildings, Cases Street, Liverpool 1. You might make up some crosswords yourself, perhaps to give your student practice in using a particular spelling pattern, or your student might enjoy making up a crossword for you to complete. Liverpool Adult Literacy Project, 73 Canning Street, Liverpool 8, have published a very useful book of crosswords, ranging from very simple to more difficult, and containing some crosswords offering practice in specific spelling patterns. The cost is 25p + 15p postage.

# Chapter 10
# Special problems and ways of overcoming them

As you work with your student, you may notice that he has difficulties with particular kinds of words, or that when he writes freely, he tends to repeat certain kinds of errors, even though he may sometimes correct these for himself when proof reading (see p. 9). A knowledge of these problems enables you to take steps to help him overcome them during your lessons.

## 1 Visual Problems

Before considering whether your student has visual problems, you need to observe whether his sight seems normal, and that he is wearing glasses if he is supposed to.

Your student may have visual problems which will need your attention if:

(i) he *regularly* confuses similar letters in his writing, eg. b and d; p and q; c and a;

(ii) he has difficulty in learning and remembering the spelling of sight vocabulary, although he gives reasonable phonetic alternatives;

(iii) he has difficulty in copying letters and words accurately;

(iv) he *often* reverses words, eg. *saw* for *was*, although he knows what he meant to write;

(v) he *often* uses the correct letters for a word, but puts them in the wrong order.

Obviously, the more of the above difficulties he displays, the more serious the nature of his problem. Since spelling is such a visual activity, you will need to provide your student with ways and means of overcoming such problems by:

(a) providing him with frequent and regular visual discrimination exercises involving (i) shapes, (ii) letters, (iii) words, eg.

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| shape | | | | | | |
| letter | p | d | b | p | q | g |
| word | on | no | on | an | no | on |

Choose the shape/letter/word that matches the one in the left hand corner;

(b) exercises in copying shapes, letters and words;

(c) activities to help him overcome his tendency to reverse letters and words, or to place letters in the wrong sequence. For example, if he reverses p and q; a simple mnemonic for one of these letters might help, eg.

a woodpecker pecks, associating the 'woodpecker' drawing with the sound of p and the right hand direction of the beak.

Sequencing exercises, using cards to spell out the sounds of words might help, eg.

| wa | s | | gir | l |
|---|---|---|---|---|

The student places the cards on the table as he pronounces each sound, or group of sounds;

(d) exercises to help develop his visual memory (see Method C, p. 19) and Kim's Game (showing an assortment of objects on a tray for a few seconds, then covering them and asking him to recite the list of things he saw). Your student needs to learn to *concentrate* his attention on remembering because, for a while at least, spelling will require a conscious effort by him to visualise words. You can use an activity like 'Kim's Game' to demonstrate the principle before moving on to words.

## 2 Auditory Problems

If you are in any doubt about your student's *ability to hear* (auditory acuity), ask your organiser for advice about referring him to a clinic or hospital for testing. It is possible for students to suffer from a slight hearing loss without realising it, and such a disability may affect the way you need to teach, and how you arrange to sit if your student is to

get the maximum benefit from his lessons. If your student is deaf in one ear, for example, sit so that the sound of your voice is directed towards his 'good' ear, and ensure that he can see your face, particularly your lips, as you talk.

Your student *may* have auditory problems if he:

(i) cannot tell the difference between short vowel sounds, eg. as in bit – bet; and *regularly* spells these quite arbitrarily;

(ii) regularly confuses eg. c and g, c and t, d and t, in his writing, (because he finds difficulty in discriminating between their *different* sounds);

(iii) has difficulty in recognising rhyming patterns, eg. lamp, damp, camp, (because he cannot hear the *similarities* in sound amongst such a group of words).

Obviously, practice exercises concentrating on particular problems such as those illustrated above may help, but it may be advisable to concentrate on visual approaches to spelling, as this is likely to be your student's stronger learning sense; Method A is likely to be particularly helpful (see p. 16).

Hearing and speech are closely connected, and if your student habitually pronounces, eg. *three* as 'free', and *mother* as 'muvver', or tends to omit the final sounds of words, and eg. says 'pi' instead of *pit*, this is how he will tend to hear it in his mind's 'ear', however much you stress your pronunciation of the sounds. Again, a visual approach, or an emphasis upon mnemonics may be the most effective solution, and you might try 'adopted pronunciation' (see Method H, p. 22).

### 3 Writing-hand problems

The student who has a history of difficulty in spelling often, although by no means always, has handwriting that is difficult for anyone to decipher, including himself. This may be (a) a *cause* of poor spelling, because over the years the student has been seeing himself write apparently incorrect patterns of certain letters, whatever his original intention. More likely, it is (b) the *result* of spelling problems, an attempt to make certain letters look ambiguous, eg. *o* and *a*, in the hope that he will be given the benefit of the doubt (some of you may remember attempting a similar trick when learning to write French!). Alternatively, (c) it may be just that your student has never learned adequate pen control, or a style of writing with which he can cope. Such students will

Platignum

# FIRST HAND

**INSTRUCTION SHEET NO. 6**

* *This leaflet can be used as a permanent 'tracing' guide. Mount on thin card and cover with clear acetate. Using a Pantone Overhead Projector marker the letters can be traced on the surface. Practise work can easily be erased with a damp cloth, dried off, and the card used again.*

Learning to write is one of the first steps towards literacy and early attempts at writing are closely linked to reading the printed alphabet. In this particular form it is sometimes called 'print script'. As the skills of speech and reading become more fluent so should the written alphabet take on a similar character and to assist this process letters need to be modified in shape with added 'entrance' and 'exit' strokes ready for joining. Both forms are illustrated below.

**PRINT SCRIPT LETTERS.** These have a shape similar to print, they are upright and round. The small letters of the alphabet are grouped into 'families' of similar movement. Make all these letters with one continuous movement except f, t, s. The capital letters are grouped together in similar proportion.

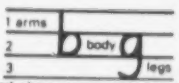
litlonmrhbpk OR kuuyccadgqoe

Circular Wide

vvw fjsxz OQCGUD HAVNTZ

Narrow Extra wide

XYK ILEFPBRSJ MW



**WRITING LETTERS.** This alphabet is slightly narrowed, sloped to the right, and where necessary has added 'entrance' and 'exit' strokes to assist joining. This is a more practical form of everyday handwriting and can be encouraged as soon as possible.

itl nmrhbpk uy cadgqoe OR é vw

fjs x z OQCGUD HAVNTZXYK

In handwriting most letters become joined together. Further details on this aspect of writing are illustrated in the Platignum Firsthand copy book.

ILEFPBRSJ MW there which one from

## FIRST WRITING TOOLS

The first writing tools used by a young person should: 1. Make a mark without undue pressure and 2. Should at least be four to five inches in length to give correct balance in the hand. * few examples are listed below.

**THICK WAX CRAYONS**
for large work

**PAINTING STICKS**
for large work

**SOFT LEAD PENCILS**

**PENLINE NYLON TIPS**

**FOUNTAIN PEN**
WITH BROAD NIB
Can be used at approximately 8 years of age

*Your Platignum writing needs can be obtained from Stationers and Stores or in the case of schools from Educational Suppliers. For further enquiries please write or phone*
PLATIGNUM COMPANY LTD SIX HILLS WAY STEVENAGE HERTS ENGLAND SG1AY TELEPHONE 0438 2488

often repeat groups of letters or words, as if their writing hand gets stuck in a particular rhythm.

You can help your student by giving him practice in developing a clearer writing style. Cursive writing, in which most letters are formed without lifting the pen from the page, and in which letters are formed with 'joining-on' strokes, is probably the best style for a student learning to spell to adopt. It encourages rhythmic pen movements, and enables whole words to be written without lifting the pen from the page. There is some useful advice on handwriting in Tom MacFarlane's 'Teaching Adults to Read', and

see example of Platignum Sheet on page 39

You might combine this handwriting practice with Method A described on p. 16.

Your student needs to learn to write not only clearly, but also with ease and a reasonable amount of speed. Some students enjoy writing to music, and together you might choose pieces of music of gradually increasing tempo, the music encouraging the maintenance of a steady rhythm along with the speed.

Whatever your student's spelling and writing problems may be, your most important contribution towards helping him is to encourage him to feel that he can succeed in learning. If you follow at least some of the procedures described in this short book, you will add to his spelling repertoire – and, remember, 95% of all spelling errors occur in only 1,000 words, and these are words most commonly used in any writing. You only need to be able to spell when you want to write, and if you can make writing enjoyable for your student, he will want to learn to spell, and succeed.

**Available from**

**Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit**
**Kingsbourne House,**
**229/231 High Holborn,**
**London WC1V 7DA**
**Telephone: 01-405 4017**

**60p**
**plus postage and packing**

**ISBN 0 906509 15 7**